

Appropriations Committee Public Hearing

Monday, February 28, 2010

Testimony Submitted by Jamie Mattos

Goodwin College Student

Chairs and members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify here today. My name is Jamie Mattos, and I am a student at Goodwin College. I am also the single mother of an eight-year-old autistic daughter. I am testifying here tonight because of my concern for the proposed cuts to the CICS Grant Program.

My current source of income is Social Security Disability. When I was asked to testify here tonight, my first thought was to make an impassioned plea about how I worked for years, paid into the system and to explain how, at 49 years of age, I find myself back in college trying to re-enter the work force. Then I realized that my personal situation is a lot less relevant than the fact that many of the women served at my school have their own stories of hardship and children to raise. I am a woman who likes to get down to brass tacks, so the bottom line is that it would be fiscally irresponsible for the state to cut such miniscule funding to a program that aids single moms in their quest for independence.

I understand the rationale for cutting funds to private schools in general, but Goodwin College is a new school. We do not have a huge endowment and we are not financially on the same footing as most other private college in the state. Most students receiving the State grant are already maxed out on loans and Pell grants. We are least able to pay out of pocket and will therefore be forced to discontinue our education, transfer to a public school, or reduce our course load. Our school services many single parents, and low-income students and we will be hardest hit by these cuts.

If I or any other single mother at my school were to leave school today, we would most likely be stuck in low paying jobs for the rest of our lives. What this means for the State of Connecticut is that instead of paying \$1,500 to \$2,000 per year to keep us in school, the State will inevitably pay far more annually in food stamps, Medicaid, housing subsidies, and Care 4 Kids, all of which we would qualify for and receive. The food stamp bill alone for a mother with one child would exceed \$2,000 dollars.

On the other hand, if I graduate and obtain substantial employment, my debt to the State will be repaid through income tax. My increased spending power will provide substantial interest via sales tax. For the remainder of my working life I will be a producing, contributing member of the State as opposed to a drain on it. Therefore, I find it totally unfeasible to cut financial aid to my school.

I propose, that if you proceed with the recommended budget cuts, that you at least review the need of each individual school and their ability to absorb the loss. Thank you for your time.